

SPRINGSTIMES

Your Sandy Springs News Source

Greetings!



As the season is coming when we enjoy our wonderful outdoors in Sandy Springs, we become more aware of the trees that give shade to our yards. The community can rest assured that this existing canopy will be protected as a result of the new tree ordinance the Sandy Springs City Council passed on February 6th.

The serious deliberations of the community and the Council leading up to passage of the ordinance demonstrate the ever-present considerations that must be balanced in decision making. On one hand, demands for regulations, such as how many trees a homeowner may cut in his yard, are presented on behalf of environmental concerns. On the other hand, we value the free society in which we live with the fundamental principle of the sanctity of private property rights. These are valid concerns.

A good bit of the debate centers on preservation of "quality of life." Essentially, this term includes both sides of the argument: environmental protection and safeguarding of private property rights.

The noise ordinance was also considered in conjunction with the tree ordinance. The Council chose to continue the old limitations on construction hours rather than extending them in the summer. This is to protect residents who cherish their peace and quiet when the construction crews must stop work. Yet the Council did not increase regulations on sound-making devices, such as pool pumps and generators.

Another issue that centers on the extent to which government will regulate the lives of citizens in Sandy Springs applies to solid waste collection. At present, recycling is not obligatory in Sandy Springs. The City is highly supportive of recycling, in order to reduce the quantities that must go into landfills. But the ordinance leaves it up to the individual homeowner to decide. The solid waste haulers are supposed to offer recycling, but this may entail extra charges.

Some homeowners have indicated they are at the mercy of a single hauler in their neighborhood, so the competitive factor does not work for them on rates and service offered by haulers. Neighborhood associations could render a huge service to their homeowners if they would delve into this issue. If an entire neighborhood is willing to switch to a different hauler who offers more for less, this has a better chance of success than if one or two home owners try to attract a lower-priced hauler.

These debates are living examples of how local government must represent conflicting viewpoints and find the proper balance. The community and Council should be congratulated on the thoroughness with which it approached each issue.

Mayor Eva Galambos, Ph.D.
City of Sandy Springs

Abernathy Greenspace Project Underway

The City of Sandy Springs has made significant strides in planning the Abernathy Greenway linear park. It will build a nearly 20-acre park along Abernathy Road from Johnson Ferry to Roswell Road. After reviewing bids from several consultants, the City selected engineering design firm PBS&J for this project. When completed, the park will offer residents numerous recreation options. Over the past several months, the City convened a series of monthly meetings with a group of involved residents with special interests in the Greenway project. This steering committee includes representatives from homeowners' associations in the vicinity and from the Sandy Springs Conservancy.

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Mayor Eva Galambos (left) presents Nancy McCord the first ever Sandy Springs Humanitarian Award. McCord was recognized as an individual for her humanitarian contributions to society and her philanthropic work. A volunteer committee made the selection.

Laborer Among the Homeless Wins MLK Honor

Nancy McCord's outreach to the homeless earned her the 2007 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award. McCord received the honors January 15th during the Sandy Springs Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration at City Hall.

A Sandy Springs resident since 1947, McCord encourages, feeds, clothes and transports the homeless to and from Sandy Springs United Methodist Church as part of a church ministry. The goal of her ongoing work is to help move Sandy Springs' homeless toward independence and self-sufficiency. She provides mentoring, hygiene products and connections to other sources of help.

"I was humbled and surprised," said McCord, who began her humanitarian work more than four years ago. "It's a great honor for me."

McCord started out with a group of church members who wished to feed the needy in the area during Thanksgiving. From that event, the ministry grew to a three-times-per-month event. By the end of the year, the church plans to provide food every Sunday.

"It's been kind of an on-the-job training, and I've learned to call some of these people friends," she said, adding that it can take considerable time to build trust with those in especially desperate straits. "Some people are just hanging off that bottom rung and once they fall off, they can't get back up."

This is the first year the City has bestowed the Humanitarian Award. A volunteer committee made the selection from a group of three finalists, which also included Randi Passoff and Dr. Dennis Turner Jr.

"We have some wonderful humanitarians in our community," said Mayor Eva Galambos. "Nancy McCord is certainly one of them, and we want to recognize the outstanding job she's done with the neediest segment of our society. Her giving spirit helps bring hope to some of the most hopeless."

The celebration featured choral tributes and a keynote address by Robert K. Goodwin, President and CEO of the Washington, DC-based Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network.

Each year, Sandy Springs will present the award to a living citizen whose stature, character, volunteerism and humanitarian work inspires the community.



Members of the Sharon United Methodist Church, under the direction of Pastor Henry Bush, sang "Ain't That Good News?" and "We Shall Overcome."

New Ordinances Passed

The City of Sandy Springs adopted a new Sign Ordinance on January 16, 2007. Some of the most important changes include the following:

- Businesses are allowed three (3), 14-day permits for temporary banners within a calendar year. Previously only one (1), 30-day permit within a calendar year was allowed.
- Two (2) standard informational signs, no larger than four (4) square feet in area and three (3) feet in height, are allowed to be placed on any property in the City for an unlimited period of time. The content is not regulated by the Ordinance, with some exceptions.
- Sign area is now measured with the use of a maximum eight-sided polygon, allowing for greater flexibility.
- Requirements for signs in the Sandy Springs Overlay District (the Roswell Road Corridor) have now been included in the Sign Ordinance, and the Design Review Board has decided that their consideration of compliant sign permits is no longer necessary prior to issuance.

Noise and Outdoor Burning Ordinances Passed Also

The Mayor and City Council passed a new Noise Ordinance on February 6, 2007. The new Ordinance, passed with amendments, clarifies the regulation and enforcement of noise in the City and regulates sources of noise through a prohibitive approach, similar to the existing Fulton County Noise Ordinance. It includes the following changes:

- Construction may take place from 7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and no construction on Sundays and holidays.

See Ordinance, continued on page 4

Fire Department Rolls to More Than 600 Calls



Firefighters recently trained in the Queen building in preparation to fight fires in highrise buildings.

December 29, 2006, marked another new beginning for Sandy Springs residents. A cadre of 97 firefighters, with an average of 12 years of multi-faceted experience each, reported for the first official day of duty with the brand-new Sandy Springs Fire Department. The day began with six new fire apparatuses, along with two rescue vehicles and two battalion vehicles, emblazoned with the City logo, setting out from City Hall in a landmark trip down Roswell Road to their four respective fire stations.

The Sandy Springs Fire Department was formed under the leadership of Fire Chief Jack McElfish, formerly of Gwinnett County, Ga. Members of the new fire department put a total of 8,600 training hours to prepare for operation. Fifteen new recruits received an additional 3,800 hours of training to prepare them to

be part of the City's first firefighting team.

On launch day, news crews gathered at Fire Station #2 on Johnson Ferry Road to find uniformed firefighters ready for their first call, sparkling new equipment being unloaded and furniture, a good portion donated by generous local residents and businesses, being delivered.

The fire department's first call came just 40 minutes after its 9 a.m. launch. In its first month of operation, Sandy Springs firefighters responded to 615 calls for service. These included calls for EMS, fire, general service and hazardous materials incidents.

To learn more about the Sandy Springs Fire Department, visit www.sandyspringsga.org and click on "Emergency Services," then "Fire." As always, if you need to report any emergency, please dial 911.



Setting Sales Tax Straight

Residents of Sandy Springs continue to have problems with vendors charging sales tax of 8 percent versus 7 percent. If you are a resident of Sandy Springs, and have been charged 8 percent sales tax in the City limits, you can get a refund.

To determine whether you're eligible, log in to www.etax.dor.ga.gov/salestax, follow the link: "1% City of Atlanta Municipal Option Sales and Use Tax" and go to the link: "City of Atlanta Address Locator." This Web site will verify that your address is not subject to the additional 1-percent sales use tax for the City of Atlanta. Print a confirmation and remit this to the establishment that charged you the 8 percent in error for a reimbursement of the sales and use taxes it collected.

If you need additional information or assistance, you may contact the Sales & Use Tax Section at 404-417-6601 or submit a specific inquiry to their Web site Taxpayer.Services@DOR.GA.GOV.



The City recently held its EMS kick-off at the Benson Center.

City Rolls Out EMS Program

Sandy Springs now has a state-of-the-art program to handle the emergencies that make up the bulk of 911 calls.

The City launched its Emergency Medical Service (EMS) program January 18th at the Dorothy C. Benson Senior Multipurpose Complex. City officials were on hand to answer questions about the program, which provides a first response consistent with recommendations of the American Heart Association.

An analysis of Fulton County's emergency calls in 2005 revealed the need for such a program in Sandy Springs. The study showed that more than 60 percent of the calls were medical emergencies, such as cardiac arrests or strokes. The City responded to these numbers by teaming up with emergency physicians from Emory Hospital and establishing the comprehensive program in a matter of months.

Under the new program, all City emergency vehicles are equipped with automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for effective first response to cardiac arrests. The City is also helping residents and visitors alike save lives by offering them access to AEDs and CPR training.

The EMS program joins the new Police and Fire departments as ground-up projects that Sandy Springs has undertaken since attaining cityhood in December 2005.

Ordinance, continued from page 2

- Landscape Contractors may work 7:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and may not work on Sundays and holidays. The exemption is that individual homeowners may work on their property for extended weekday and weekend hours, as well as on Sundays and holidays.

- Radios may be played until 11 p.m. on weeknights and until midnight (12:00 a.m.) on weekends and holidays with sound audible to the property line.

On November 8, 2006, the City passed an Outdoor Burning Ordinance. It is illegal to burn outdoors in Sandy Springs other than to cook food, to train firefighters, to teach fire safety techniques by Sandy Springs city officials and to stay warm by burning in a barrel. Some open flame devices are allowable such as candles, lanterns, blow torches and portable heaters, for example.

For complete copies of these and all of the City's ordinances, please visit www.sandyspringsga.org.

Abernathy, continued from page 1

"We came into this design and planning process with a blank slate," said City Manager John McDonough. "Our main goal is to listen to the community's needs and desires and design a park tailored to suit them."

For updates on the progress of the Abernathy Greenway linear park project, please visit www.sandyspringsga.org.

The HEAT is On



Officer David Lapides has made 17 DUI arrests since he's been on the job.

The Sandy Springs Police Department received a Highway Enforcement of Aggressive Traffic (HEAT) grant from the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) in late November. The primary goals of the HEAT project are to reduce impaired driving crashes; reduce excessive speeding; increase the safety belt usage rate; and educate the public on traffic safety matters. Since December, the HEAT Unit has made 17 DUI arrests and issued 111 traffic-related citations.

"We don't want to keep people from having fun," said HEAT Officer David Lapides. "We do want them to take the responsibility of when they go out and drink to get a designated driver. My personal goal is to identify impaired drivers before they cause a threat to the public and cause a loss of life or property."

The Sandy Springs Police Department HEAT Unit will develop and implement strategies to reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities from drugs and alcohol, speed and aggressive driving and non-use of safety belts within their jurisdiction.

The grant will provide Sandy Springs with two marked vehicles and one officer. Included in the grant are funds to cover equipment for the vehicle including speed detection devices (laser and radar), road signage for safety checks, two laptops and MDVR camera systems, radio and emergency equipment as well as funds for training, gas and vehicle maintenance. The HEAT grant is effective for one year.

Officer Lapides works toward educating the public. He presents at high schools, homeowners' associations and at churches on the dangers of driving under the influence and how alcohol works in the body. In the coming months, motorists can look for road safety checks, holiday enforcement, speed details, saturated patrols where DUIs have been found and checks for underage sales. If you would like Officer Lapides to speak at your organization, he may be reached at 770-551-3325.

City Passes Tree Ordinance

One of the City of Sandy Springs' priorities, from its inception has been to protect the trees that enrich the character of our neighborhoods. Our newly adopted tree ordinance was, after an extended period of public input and committee recommendations, adopted on February 6th. Homeowners and developers should visit www.sandyspringsga.org, and click on "City Departments," then "Community Development" to view a copy of the ordinance.

The newly adopted tree ordinance outlines:

- The types and sizes (listed by trunk diameter) that are considered landmark or protected trees, or that that require a permit for removal;
- The percentage of tree canopy, or cover, (30 percent) that needs to be maintained on residential properties;
- Requirements and guidelines for replanting removed trees; and
- Details about the Tree Bank, a fund that will help further ecological education and increase tree canopy in public areas of the City.